

JANUARY 1958 • 50c

Ceramics MONTHLY



Tom Sellers describes

HANDLES

other than clay



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The 1958 Great Lakes Ceramic Hobby Exhibition and Workshop

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3. Apply 2 heavy coats Burnished Amber (565), then 1 heavy coat of Turquoise (543). Greenware O.K.
4. Apply 3 coats of Pink (542), then 2 coats of Antique Seaweed Green (560). Greenware O.K.
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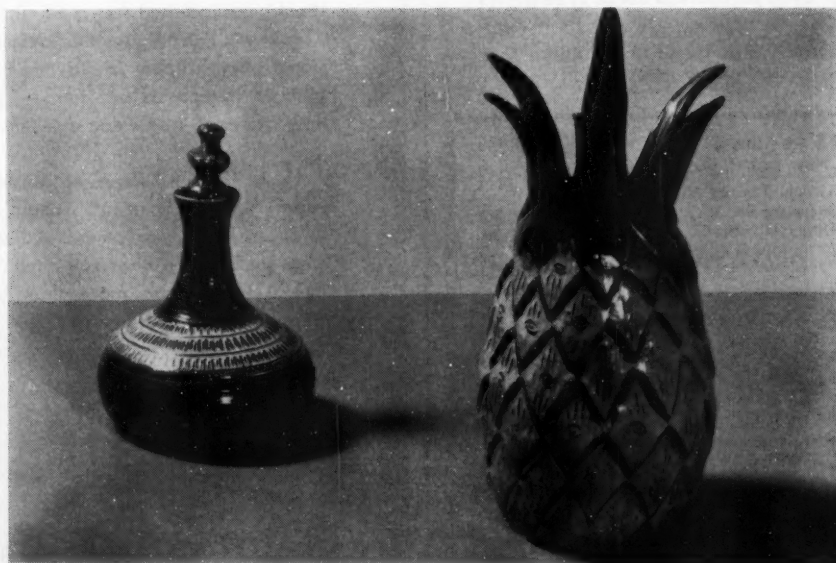
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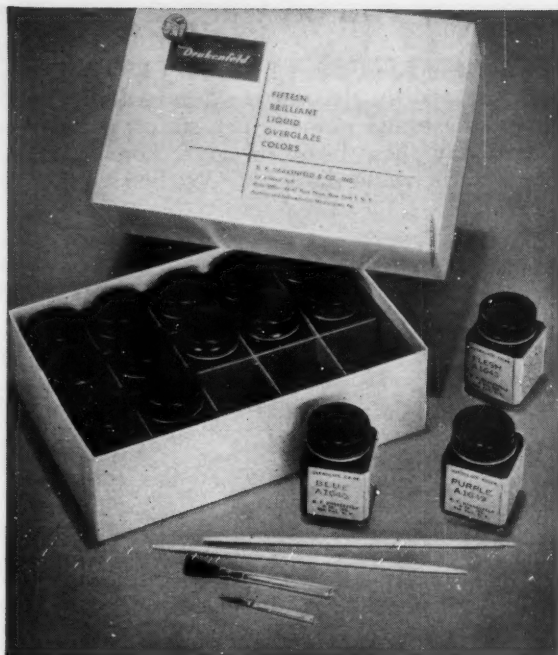
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TEACHER'S PET

EVERY TEACHER has one — a pet IDEA, that is — and yours can be worth \$10 if you will share it!

JUST SEND a "Letter to the Editor" describing one of your favorite techniques when working with children of elementary and high-school age. Your letter can be of a broad nature, telling about your general approach to a class; or it can be a step-by-step description of a specific project. If the CM editors feel it will be helpful to other teachers, you will receive \$10 immediately and your letter will be published as a special feature in CM (see page 16, this issue).

SPECIFICALLY, your "letter" should be between two and three pages long, typed double spaced. And it should be illustrated — at least one or two photos or sketches should be included for it to qualify as a "Teacher's Pet." You needn't hire a professional photographer in order to furnish big pictures. Snapshots are fine — providing they are crisp and clear and tell the story.

SO REVIEW some of the classroom capers you now take for granted and plan to share them with others. As Longfellow once said: "Give what you have. To someone it may mean more than you dare think." What he didn't add (but we will), "You can earn \$10 while you're at it!"

in this issue of



On Our Cover: Thrown tea set by James Crumrine of New York City, has a light matt green glaze with an overspray of manganese. Cover design by Robert L. Creager.

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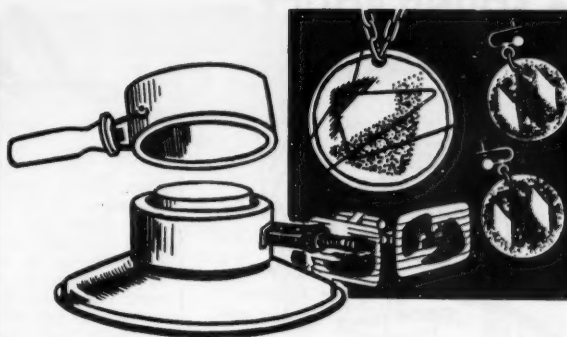
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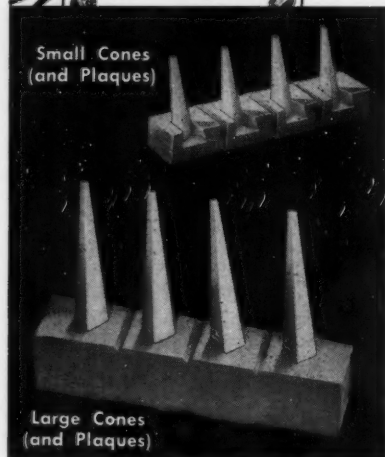
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Letters

A ROSE IS A ROSE

Dear Editor:

The article on flower making (Nov. 1957) started a hot-and-heavy discussion, as it always does. However, I do make them and believe that, correctly made and used, they have a proper place. Regardless of the fact that the artist potter will throw up his hands in horror, he must admit that some of the cathedrals in Italy are adorned with wreaths of flowers, fruits and yes, even cupids, made by fine Italian artists. I have seen photographs of these and, although exposed to the weather, the glaze has kept them in fine condition.

Mrs. G.B.H.
Williamsport, Pa.

NOTE OF APPRECIATION

During the years that I have subscribed to your magazine I have not hesitated to let you know how I feel regarding the articles. During this time, I have acquired a very deep conviction that you and your staff have made a definite contribution to the improvement of the ceramics field. I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation for all your efforts on our behalf. I look forward, as do many others, to each new issue and would not willingly part with any one of them. You have become a part of our lives that has stimulated, encouraged and uplifted any person who has even casually glanced at your publication. We all owe you a deep and lasting gratitude.

A. J. SPENCER
St. Petersburg, Fla.

POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS

In consideration of the contemptible anti-French work of the U.S.A. in North Africa, don't renew my subscription.

MME. M. A. POINT
Algiers, North Africa

ON WITH ENAMELING!

Dear Editor:

As you well know Ceramics Monthly is used in the art departments in many of our junior and senior high schools where we carry on a variety of arts and crafts activities.

I trust that you will continue to publish the excellent articles on enameling, stained glass, etc. We would have a very limited use for your magazine if it were to be confined strictly to ceramic art.

A. G. PELIKAN, Director of Art
Milwaukee Public Schools
Milwaukee, Wis.

LOVE THAT WIT

Dear Editor:

I find CM instructive for enameling and I even benefit from the potter's techniques. Kathe Berl's articles are wonderful, and I love the wit she adds sometimes.

Mrs. GENE BOSHKO
Jackson Heights, L. I., N.Y.

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION

Dear Editor:

I beg to differ with Oppi Untracht (Nov. 1957) on "some overblown, narrow-necked ceramic objects potters call bottles which smugly defy function and ostentatiously proclaim their uselessness;" and ask him to consider the extreme usefulness

of these large-bellied, narrow-necked bottles used to carry liquids (water, wine, oil, etc.) over the rocky roads of southern countries, without spilling their contents. Also, from a narrow neck, one pours with greater precision (as an experiment will prove at once).

Besides, a narrow-necked bottle to southern people serves a hygienic purpose. Only recently have I seen how such a bottle was tipped to spout a narrow stream of water through the air and—right in—to the mouth of the thirsty recipient—without his lips ever touching the rim of the vessel.

MARGUERITE BODEM
Villa Park, Ill.

A VOTE FOR WALKUP

Dear Editor:

We enjoy the articles by F. Carlton Ball and Tom Sellers, and find them very informative and helpful. We would appreciate a return of Vera Walkup and her articles on decorative techniques.

Mr. & Mrs. H. M. FINK
Metuchen, N.J.

AD LIBS FROM READERS

CM subscription renewals often carry interesting memos, too short to run as regular letters. From time to time, we'll publish some of the more interesting comments we receive.—Ed.

"Please, please, how can I prevent crazing?"

Mrs. D. W.
Ivyland, Pa.

"I work with Girl Scouts and also a bazaar group, and although I enjoy all your articles, I would like simple subjects for our purposes."

Mrs. R. T.
Leonia, N.J.

"I would like to see articles on abstract or modern designs developed from a geometric or naturalistic approach."

M. C. S.
Orlando, Fla.

"How about some enameling and ceramics that a rank (very rank) amateur can do?"

Mrs. W. E.
Lexington, Ky.

"I would like to see articles for the amateur on brush strokes, facial features and glazing."

Mrs. J. S.
Lind, Wash.

"I am a public school teacher and more articles on the children's level, like the piggy banks over the balloons (Oct. 1956), would be very useful."

Mrs. M. W.
Big Rapids, Mich.

"I'd like to know some of the 'tricks of the trade' on operating a kiln. Also articles on ceramic sculpture by Edris Eckhardt."

Mrs. J. P.
Hinsdale, Ill.

"I enjoy your instructive, step by step articles, such as those by Marc Bellaire; and Tom Sellers' articles on the wheel and Henry Bollman's on hand work all are helpful in teaching classes."

Mrs. I. B.
Valparaiso, Ind.

"Let's have more on regional doings."

I. M.
Colorado Springs, Colo.

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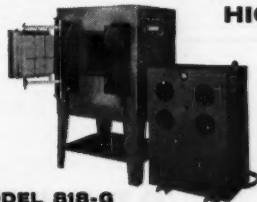
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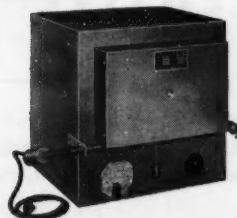
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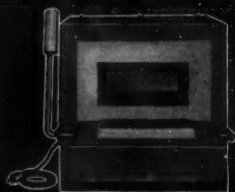
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DEALER INQUIRIES INVITED

Itinerary

Send show announcements early—WHERE TO SHOW: three months ahead of entry date; WHERE TO GO: at least six weeks before opening.

WHERE TO SHOW

★national competition

FLORIDA, CORAL GABLES
March 20-April 20

★"Sixth Annual Miami National Ceramic Exhibition," sponsored by the Ceramic League of Miami, at the Joe and Emily Lowe Art Gallery, University of Miami, Coral Gables. Fee: \$3. Deadline: February 24. For further information and entry blanks, write to the Lowe Gallery. Selected pieces will be circulated by the Smithsonian Institute.

KANSAS, WICHITA
April 12-May 19

"Thirteenth Decorative Arts-Ceramic Exhibition" of the Wichita Art Association. Open to all American craftsmen in ceramic sculpture, enamel, and mosaics as well as textiles, silver-smithing, jewelry and metalry, wood sculpture, garden sculpture and hand wrought glass. \$2,000 in cash prizes, purchase and special awards. Jury, \$3 entrance fee. For details, contact Maude G. Schollenberger, 401 North Belmont Ave.

WASHINGTON, SEATTLE
March 9-April 9

Craftsmen of Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, British Columbia and Alaska are eligible for the Sixth Annual Northwest Craftsmen's Exhibition to be held at the Henry Gallery, University of Washington. Separate juries will select entries for exhibition and award prizes in four classes, including ceramics, ceramic sculpture, enamels and mosaics. Local work due February 7-8; out-of-town work, February 8. Detailed rules and entry blanks available from the Henry Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle 5.

WHERE TO GO

CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO
January 5-26

Prize-winning pieces and a large selection of other work from the 19th Ceramic National, "The Syracuse Show," at the San Diego Fine Arts Gallery. Circulated by the Syracuse Museum.

CANADA
MANITOBA, WINNIPEG
through January 18

"Craftsmanship in a Changing World," circulated by the American Federation of Arts, at the University of Manitoba.

FLORIDA, PENSACOLA
January 5-February 15

"Italian Arts and Crafts," a Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition, at the Pensacola Art Center.

GEORGIA, COLUMBUS
through January 15
"American Craftsmen, 1957," a Smith-

sonian Institution Traveling Exhibition, at the Columbus Museum of Arts and Crafts, Inc.

ILLINOIS, CHICAGO
through February 2
"Animal Sculpture in Pre-Columbian Art" at the Gallery of Primitive Arts, Art Institute of Chicago, Michigan Ave. and Adams St. Contains 150 sculptures, mostly ceramic, from ancient Peru and Mexico.

KANSAS, TOPEKA
February 2-23
"American Craftsmen, 1957," circulated by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, at the Mulvane Art Center.

MARYLAND, BALTIMORE
through January 5
"Early American Folk Sculpture" at the Baltimore Museum of Art.

NEW YORK, BUFFALO
January 1-31
Annual ceramic hobby exhibit of the Western New York Ceramic Dealers Association at the Erie County Bank, Main and Niagara streets.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK
through January 5
Women's International Exposition at the 71st Regiment Armory, 34th St. and Park Ave.

OHIO, YELLOW SPRINGS
January 19-February 9
"Midwest Designer-Craftsmen," at the Kettering Library of Antioch College. A Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition.

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(Contest closes midnite June 30, 1958)
- B—See our NEW FREE CATALOG—1957-1958 Supplement—for suggestions on how to create a piece that is truly your own.
- C—Get to work combining basic molds and trimming molds. Let your imagination run wild. The combinations are endless.

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Suggestions

from our readers

Storage Box for Schools

Out with the galvanized can which, when used for clay storage, will rust in too short a time! Instead have the school shop make a rough box from tongue and groove lumber. Paint it inside and out, put casters on the bottom, handles on the sides, and hinge the top.

For an inside liner bag, sew together heavy or medium weight plastic, and seal the seams with a plastic cement. The bag may be stapled around the top of the box; or a



groove, large enough to accept plastic clothesline and the thickness of the plastic liner, can be sawed out about one inch down from the top of the box. The plastic bag is placed in the box and the clothesline is forced into the slot. This method makes it possible to remove the bag.

Staple plastic across the underside of the hinged lid. For a tighter seal, use a sponge rubber strip stapled along the top edge of the box. Moist clay can be stored in this box or, if the seams of the bag have been sealed with plastic cement, powdered clay can be mixed.

The casters make the box easy to move around the classroom. Several students can get their hands into the box at the same time, and there is no need to reach down deep into a tall container for the clay.

— John D. Wright, Bay City, Mich.

Kiln Space-Saver

Shelves with broken corners can be handy for saving kiln space. Tall pieces can be stacked so they clear the corners of the broken shelves. Small pieces can be stacked normally.

— Lee and Irving Levy, Levittown, N.Y.

Coin Weights

A simple balance scale is not expensive. You can easily make one by carefully balancing a beam, from which two flat plates or dishes are suspended. A set of good weights can be expensive—but here is an idea that eliminates the need for expensive weights.

Use coins where close-approximate weights, rather than exact weights, are needed. Here is a simple conversion chart listing several common coins and their



weights in grams: Half dollar equals 12½ gm.; quarter, 6½; dime, 2½.

Weights in grains are as follows: Half dollar equals 200 gr.; quarter, 100; nickel, 80; penny, 50; dime, 40. One

(More Suggestions on page 10)

The Ceramic Show Window of the Nation

CERAMIC HOBBYISTS from all areas are promised an **EXCITING EXPERIENCE**, when 85 CERAMIC EXPERTS from many states demonstrate the very newest techniques from 115 exhibit booths reserved by the nation's leading Manufacturers, in the **SIXTH ANNUAL EASTERN CERAMIC HOBBY SHOW OF 1958**, in Asbury Park, N. J., from May 8-11.

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COURTESY DISCOUNT TICKETS, allowing a 70c admission, will be available through Exhibitors or League Members; and **SPECIAL FOUR-DAY PASSES** will be issued at reduced rates at the box office. **SHOW HOURS** will be from 1 PM to 9 PM every day. Ample parking space and a wide variety of Motel and Hotel accommodations are available close by at reasonable rates.

Send for information. **HOBBYISTS** are urged to **PLAN NOW TO ATTEND**. Take advantage of this **ONCE A YEAR OPPORTUNITY!** Take home some **NEW** and **REFRESHING IDEAS!**

DEALERS AND STUDIO OWNERS will be able to contact most leading Manufacturers at the show, and also will be able to discuss business under private, favorable circumstances. It is anticipated that a record-breaking number of new Ceramic Products and Materials, as well as many Ceramic Specialties will be revealed at this show for the first time, since the Exhibitor List composes the most comprehensive representation of prominent Manufacturers.

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CM's Pic of the Month: Stoneware jar by Marguerite Wildenhain, noted potter and teacher of Pond Farm Workshop, Guerneville, Calif. It received a special Award of Merit, the first to be made, at the 1954 Scripps College Ceramics Show. In describing it, Carlton Atherton, well-known teacher, potter, historian and authority in ceramics, said: "It has a quality of simple beauty and dignity akin to the spirit of the Sung potters. The sturdy plastic decoration is subtle and in complete agreement with both the nature of the material and the character of the form."

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SUGGESTIONS

(Continued from page 7)

ounce equals 437½ grains. Therefore, two half dollars (400 gr.) and a dime (40 gr.) combined are near enough to serve as a one-ounce weight.

— Jac Hittleman, Flushing, N.Y.

Toothpaste Tube Stencils

Salvage the metal from your empty toothpaste or shaving cream tubes. Since this soft metal stays where it is bent, it is easy to handle and is water repellent. It's ideal for applying designs and patterns as a stencil on wet green or bisque ware.

Simply open the tube with a pair of scissors and then slide or run a hammer over the metal to smooth out



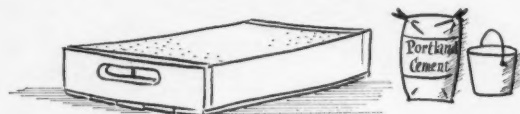
the wrinkles. Cut out the desired designs or patterns. Strips cut from this metal also are handy for binders for tightly closing the top of plastic storage or protective bags.

— Pearl E. FitzPatrick, Gary, Ind.

Wedging Block

You hear a great deal of comment about plaster wedging boards. Some say the plaster should be covered with canvas; others say to wedge right on the plaster surface. The facts are that the plaster will chip; and chips of plaster in the clay wall will blow up in the kiln, taking pieces of the clay wall with them. Also, plaster will deteriorate with use.

To eliminate this possible hazard, I made my wedging board of Portland cement. The base (under part) was a



3 to 1 mix. The top ¼-inch was neat cement. This was troweled smooth and the top edges were beveled.

A cement wedging board doesn't need a "frame" around it for support. It can be poured in a cardboard box, the cardboard to be torn away later. For real sturdiness and weight, you can cast it in a wood soft-drink box. It will last forever!

— Henry Colton, Manatee, Fla.

No Stilts Necessary

Stilting pieces in the kiln always has been somewhat of a problem in my school ceramics work. Because I have so many different students making many pieces, I can keep two kilns going almost constantly.

After experimenting for a year, I have discovered that stilts are not necessary. We purchased a 4 x 8-foot sheet of 3/16-inch asbestos board and cut part of it into pieces large enough to cover our tile setters so the feet of the next setter would rest on the asbestos.

Asbestos can be sawed with a hand saw or broken

(More Suggestions on page 31)

Q *Answers to* Questions

Conducted by the CM Technical Staff

Q Is it possible to get a crackle glaze at stoneware temperature? If so, would it be all right to use it on vases and other pieces that are supposed to hold water?

Stoneware glazes crackle on occasion but since stoneware clay is impervious to water there is no great harm in using glazes that crackle. For decorative objects, they are especially suitable. However, one difficulty may arise: The cracks in the glaze are so tight—that is, there is so little space in the cracks—that fine oil paint can't be rubbed in to bring out the pattern of the crackle. Only a dye will stain the cracks and this isn't satisfactory because it will fade in a short time.

But there is a liquid which will penetrate and give strong color to the cracks in a crackled piece of stoneware. Add 1 part sulphuric acid to 12 parts water and mix slowly and carefully in a plastic bowl. Dissolve sugar in

this dilute acid until you have a saturated solution. Then soak the crackle-glazed pot in the liquid for a given time and check the time: depending on the pot, one or two minutes should be enough. If the pot is soaked too long, the color of the crackle will be too strong. On the other hand, if the pot is not immersed in the liquid long enough, there will be insufficient color.

Sponge off the liquid carefully and wipe the pot clean. Place it in your kitchen oven and heat it to 300°F. for ten minutes or more. Keep looking into the oven and when the crackle becomes good and black, remove the finished pot.

CRACKLE celadon glaze, Ming Dynasty.

In a 300° oven, the sugar and acid react turning the sugar to carbon. Since the sugar and acid solution has been absorbed into even the finest cracks in the glaze, the crackle lines are blackened.

To get a blacker color, repeat the process of soaking and heating. If the color is too strong (from soaking too long in the liquid), heat the pot at 500° until all the color in the cracks disappears. Then resoak the pot for a shorter period of time.—F. CARLTON BALL

Q Do you advise the use of colors that are prepared in oil as being easier for a beginner to use when learning to china paint?

I have not been much in favor of tube colors prepared for china painting as there is a separation of the pigment and oil mixture so that it is not uniform in consistency. The oil comes out first, and you must soften the remainder in the tube. There are several kinds of new prepared colors that are put up in jars. These are easy for a beginner to

(Continued on page 29)



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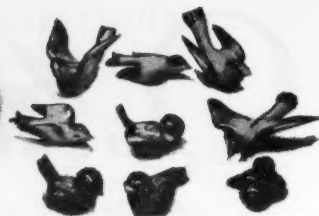
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MATCHED SETS

From Slabs

by DON WOOD

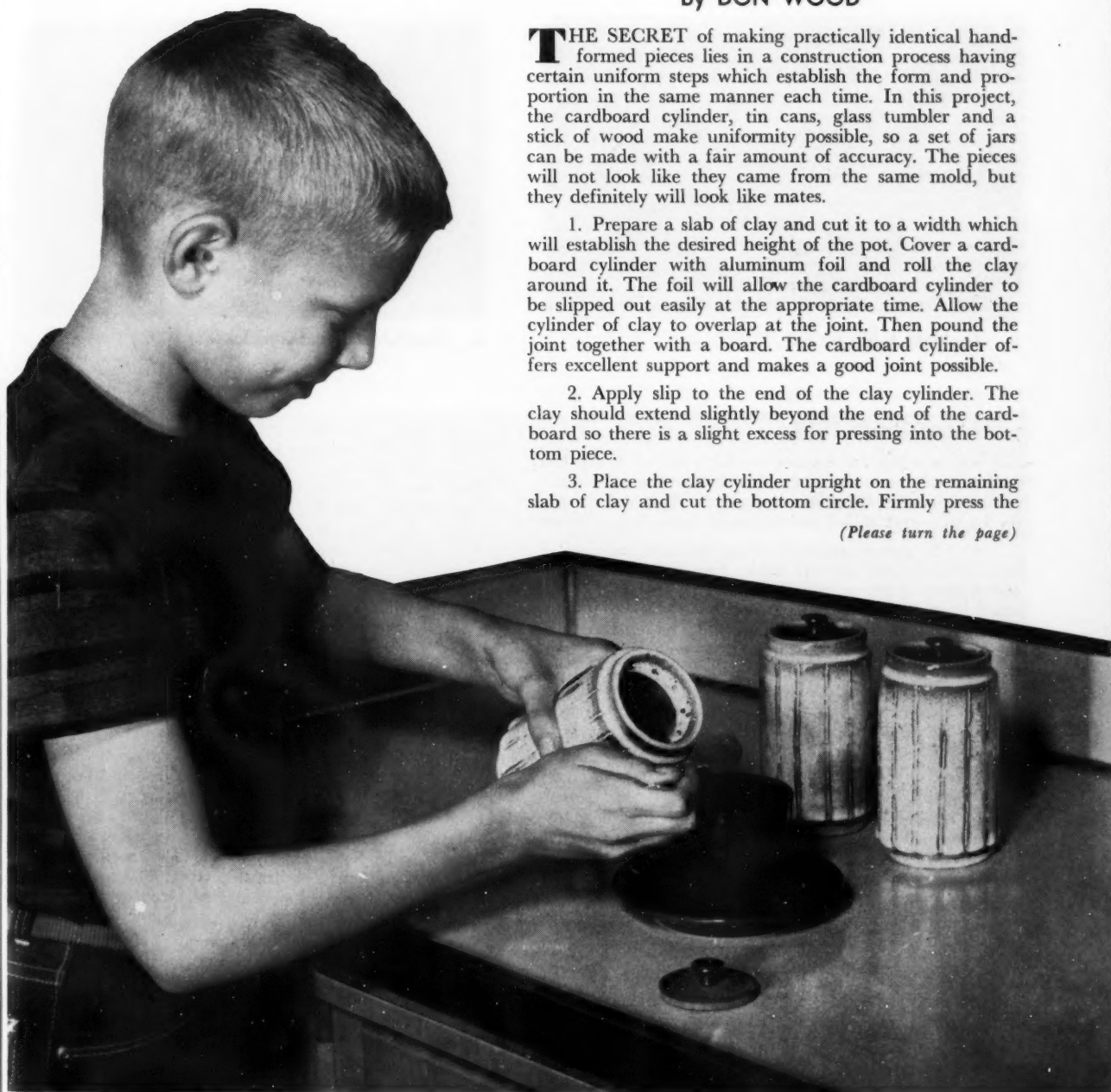
THE SECRET of making practically identical hand-formed pieces lies in a construction process having certain uniform steps which establish the form and proportion in the same manner each time. In this project, the cardboard cylinder, tin cans, glass tumbler and a stick of wood make uniformity possible, so a set of jars can be made with a fair amount of accuracy. The pieces will not look like they came from the same mold, but they definitely will look like mates.

1. Prepare a slab of clay and cut it to a width which will establish the desired height of the pot. Cover a cardboard cylinder with aluminum foil and roll the clay around it. The foil will allow the cardboard cylinder to be slipped out easily at the appropriate time. Allow the cylinder of clay to overlap at the joint. Then pound the joint together with a board. The cardboard cylinder offers excellent support and makes a good joint possible.

2. Apply slip to the end of the clay cylinder. The clay should extend slightly beyond the end of the cardboard so there is a slight excess for pressing into the bottom piece.

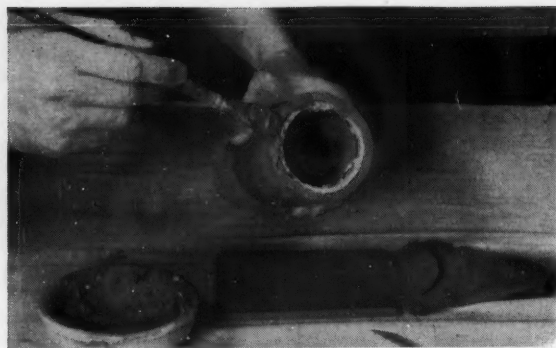
3. Place the clay cylinder upright on the remaining slab of clay and cut the bottom circle. Firmly press the

(Please turn the page)

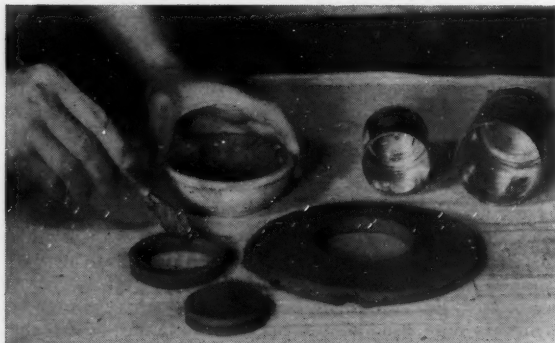




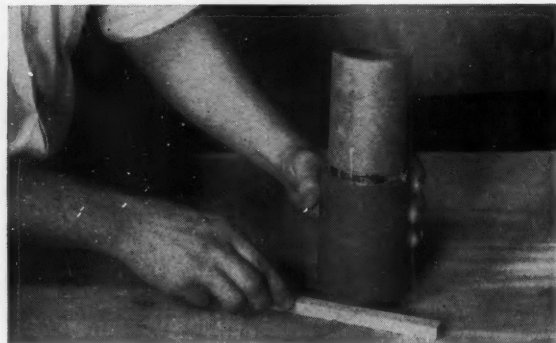
1. Roll the clay around the cylinder . . .



2. Apply slip to the end of the cylinder . . .



5. Apply slip to cut-out rim . . .



6. Establish uniform height for foot . . .

. . . MATCHED SETS

clay cylinder against the bottom for a strong bond. Clay and slip will ooze out at the bottom leaving some distortion. When this happens, the cylinder should be turned on its side and rolled on the table until it is uniform.

4. The procedures for cutting the foot rim and the rim of the mouth are the same. Two tin cans are used, one slightly larger in diameter than the other. Punch a small hole in the bottom of each can. Mark the size of the larger can first, then center the smaller can inside the circle. Cut the small circle first, then finish cutting the large circle to complete the rim. Cut the circles as if you were cutting out cookies. In pressing out a "cookie" the air escapes through the hole in the can. To remove the "cookie," cover the hole with your finger. The suction created by covering the hole releases the "cookie," without distorting it. Should the "cookie" stick, blow into the can through the hole, and it will pop out.

5. Apply slip to the cut-out rim. The slab from which the rim is cut should be the same thickness as the stick of wood to be used for finishing the foot rim in the next step.

6. Roll the clay cylinder, with the foot rim attached, along the stick to establish a uniform height for the foot. The edge of the stick next to the foot rim is tapered inward. This gives the pot a more trim look. Absolutely vertical sides on a foot rim would make the piece appear clumsy. Do not remove the cardboard cylinder or strip the foil from the inside of the clay piece. The procedure for closing the other end of the clay cylinder is the same as steps two and three. Construct the rim for the mouth exactly like the foot rim.

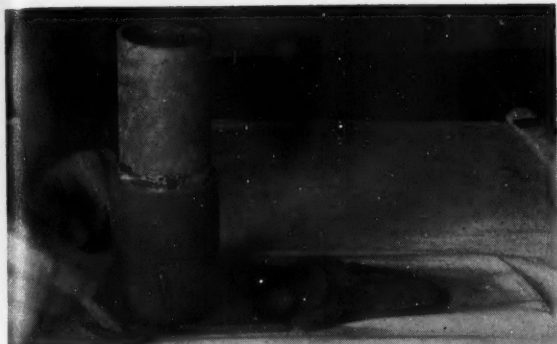
7. Since the dimensions of the inside of the mouth rim are critical, a glass tumbler is used to create a true circle. This will make the problem of fitting a lid easier. Make the mouth rim slightly funnel-shaped, using the glass tumbler and the same tapered-edge stick used in making the foot rim. This type opening is appropriate for a container into which things will be dumped or poured. When both ends are closed, the air trapped inside the cylinder will support it until the work is finished—even if the clay is still soft. The pot may be rolled on its side at this stage to even up the cylinder.

8. When the clay is leather hard, cut out the top of the container with a paring knife. Allow enough rim to remain to support the lid. At this stage, I accented the cylinder shape by marking the pot with vertical grooves. The grooves also give the glaze an opportunity to break and run, softening the color.

I used lids made from a dark brown wood about 1/4-inch thick, to contrast with the white glaze, and brass knobs which were purchased at the hardware store. I used these contrasting materials for the sake of interest, but it would be just as easy to cut clay "cookies" for the lids and glaze them a contrasting color. The materials you choose are a matter of personal preference.

The jars were made large enough to hold the contents of the regular size package of instant coffee, tea and cocoa. However, you may vary the sizes to meet your own needs.

Although the finished jars are not *identical*, they do *look alike*. Pay less attention to matching details, and concentrate on making each piece good in its own right. The major steps in the forming process will insure their looking enough alike to be recognized as a set. ●



3. Cut out the bottom circle . . .



4. Press out "cookie" for foot rim . . .



7. Use a glass tumbler for perfect circle . . .



8. Cut out top of container with paring knife . . .



DEFINITELY MATES, although not identical, the finished jars show characteristic differences usually associated with hand-crafted items. Concentrate on making each pot good in its own right.



TEACHER'S PET

DAY CAMPERS PROUDLY exhibit the projects they made during their two-week summer course in ceramics. Those big smiles serve as proof that ceramics is fun.



TWO WEEKS OF CERAMICS

by ROBERT J. SCHAEFER

Williamsville Central High School
Williamsville, New York

After reading Mrs. Ralph T. Wattenburger's letter to the editor, entitled "But Want More for Kids" (Oct. 1957), Mr. Schaefer felt a challenge to write this letter. Because of the continuous demand for this type of information, CM will feature the "Teacher's Pet" page regularly. In addition, we'll pay \$10 for acceptable material. For details, see "Teacher's Pet" on page 2.—Ed.

OUR CERAMICS PROGRAM has been operating during the summer for the past few years. Boys and girls, ranging in age from six to 10, attend a 45-minute class in ceramics each day for a two-week period. The imagination, originality and fun these youngsters have when working with clay leads us to share our ideas with other readers of CERAMICS MONTHLY.

We introduce the class to ceramics by giving three short demonstrations on ways to form clay—pinch bowls, slab building and coils. Together with these demonstrations, we show a variety of projects that are possible with each technique. First the pinch bowl, little candy dishes, small baskets with handles, ash trays for father, cereal bowls, dishes for the family pets, and similar ideas for useful articles.

Sometimes we use rocks for draping clay to form interesting shapes. When each member of the class is well along with his individual ideas, we introduce the class to press molds, model-

ing and also to the potter's wheel.

The slab method of forming clay always is very popular. Children learn to use a rolling pin very easily, and the thickness of the clay can be controlled by sticks of varying dimensions. The most popular project in slab building is a comic mask or caricature (theoretically of some member of the family) to hang on the wall at home. Hand prints with names and dates, flower dishes, modernistic bowls, and

animals usually are done. A leaf picked from a tree makes an excellent template for a slab-built ash tray.

The third method, coil building, is a little more troublesome for children in this age bracket to handle, but it can be done. Rolling the coils requires a little more patience and practice than some boys and girls of this age are willing to give. But those who try it are rewarded with pleasing results. Sugar bowls and cream pitchers, dishes, bowls, pitchers, and large ash trays are a few articles the children have made from coils.

The press molds we use are the usual variety—animals, jewelry and similar small designs—which can be purchased in any ceramic dealer's shop.

Modeling is a creative means with which some students do remarkably well. Basic modeling techniques are explained first; then the child is free to use his imagination. A wide variety of ideas usually is brought out—some having the stroke of genius attached to them. Some of the articles the children have made include figurines, both modern and realistic; various animals in a variety of poses, cave men, airplanes, submarines, boats, people and many other good conversation pieces.

We hope our summer program may give other teachers of children an idea or two for projects which their classes can develop. •



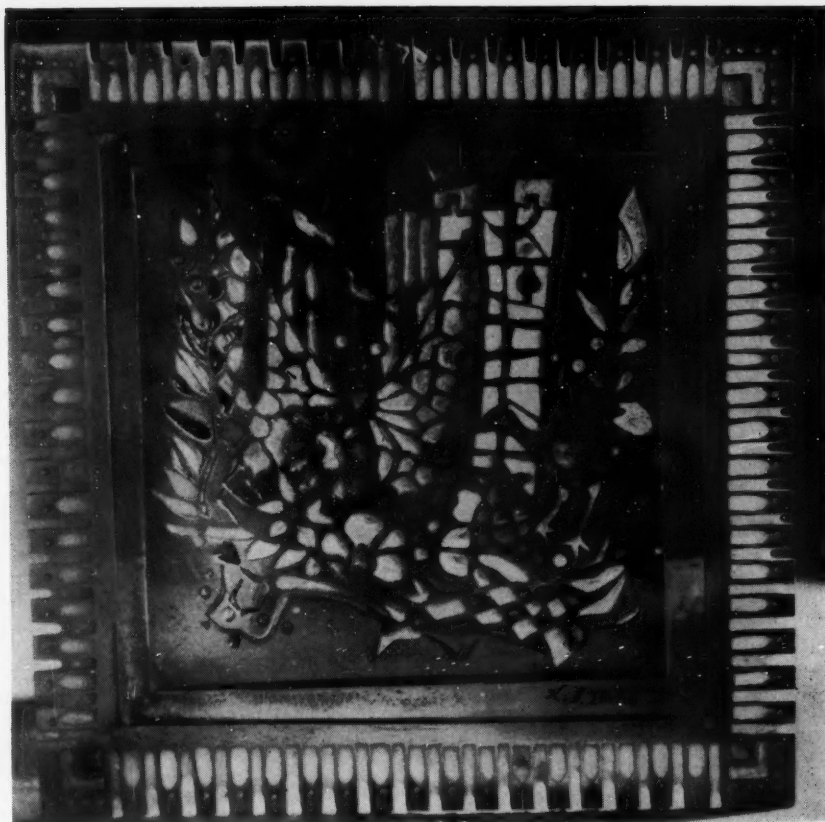
SLAB BUILDING is popular with children since they can easily learn to handle a rolling pin properly.

ENAMELING TECHNIQUES

by KENNETH F. BATES

"THE WINDOW," a plique-a-jour
by Kenneth Bates, won first prize
at the Cleveland Museum of Art
in 1952. Constructed by
the sawed method, its colors are
chartreuse, turquoise, red, blue
and flux. It measures 5" x 5".

Mr. Bates demonstrates the technique
for making this piece on the
following pages.



PLIQUE-A-JOUR (part 1)

In previous CM articles on enameling, Mr. Bates discussed basic recommended enameling procedures [May 1957] and the technique of cloisonne [June-July 1957]. In forthcoming articles, he will describe his technique for doing champleve.—Ed.

IN ITALY, toward the end of the fifteenth century when considerable painted enameling was being produced, another type of enameling, called *plique-a-jour*, was introduced. We find Benvenuto Cellini, the Italian master of gold and silver work, mentioning it. Russian craftsmen, from the latter part of the nineteenth century until the present, have been famous for exquisitely wrought examples of the technique. The work of Swedish and Swiss masters also has been acclaimed.

The term, *plique-a-jour*, partly Italian and partly French in derivation, is an apt one for it means a thin membrane (*plique*) like a skin or veil stretched over an opening which allows the light of day (*a-jour*) to pass through. In the finished piece, transparent enamels are suspended without backing in small openings in metal, giving the effect of miniature stained glass windows.

Perhaps no other kind of enameling is quite as glowing or sparkling as *plique-a-jour*. The enamelwork we see more frequently—colored glass fired on a base of metal—is brilliant but add to this brilliance the effect of light passing through the colored glass and we realize the true characteristic of the technique. When you hold a piece of this work before a strong light source, you are amazed at the quite unexpected intensity of the color.

There are numerous ways of putting *plique-a-jour* to practical use in contemporary items. Electric lighting accessories for example—enameled panels or sections could be incorporated in or combined with sections of metal or glass for wall or ceiling lights. Shades for lamps or candles are another possibility. A *plique-a-jour* picture with an outer frame (no backing) can be hung in a sun-lighted window; or it might be placed on the mantle with small hidden lights illuminating it from behind. If the picture is arranged in a frame with a swivel joint, and the solid parts are enameled one color on the front and another color on the back, the picture may be turned giving an effect at night different from that of the daytime. Mobile earrings and larger mobiles for indoors or outdoor use are effective ways in which the technique can be incorporated.

One method of making *plique-a-jour* might be called the "pierced method." It consists of sawing out a pattern of holes and filling them with transparent enamels until the holes are "flooded over."

Question of Metal

First, choose the proper kind and gauge of metal. Almost any metal that can be enameled may be used as a base. In connection with gold, however, it has been my experience that pure gold (24 carat) or at least 18 carat works better than lesser carats of that metal. The same holds true for silver—fine silver being much more satisfactory than sterling. The reason is that a piece receives many firings and, if a less pure metal is used,

(Please turn the page)

... Plique-a-jour



RUSSIAN CRAFTSMEN were fond of the plique a jour technique. The intricate pieces above are examples of their work.

the smaller holes will show too much oxidation around the edges where tiny holes or thin lines are desired. This oxidation tends to fill up the space and allows little or no light to come through. This will not occur when fine gold or fine silver is used. Copper is less satisfactory for the more detailed type of plique-a-jour. Another problem connected with sterling silver is that the surface as well as the edges oxidize after several firings, and this delicate framework is difficult to polish. With fine metals the difficulty is avoided. One must remember, of course, that when fine silver or 24-carat gold is used, the metal network becomes exceedingly soft and though there is little polishing to do, it is still a rather delicate job. For plique-a-jour work, I would suggest that a metal of at least 18 gauge be used. A thinner gauge will not give enough strength to hold the tiny "windows" in place.

Choose Enamels Carefully

Now let us consider the enamel. The simplest and most logical method of selection is to make preliminary tests of each color. Choose only the clearest of the transparents and follow the general rule of cold colors for white metals, warm colors for gold or copper. It is well known that the higher-firing, or harder, transparents are usually the most brilliant. This offers some problem if you are working with an alloyed metal because the less pure the metal, the lower the melting point; therefore the greater the risk of melting the metal before the enamel is fused. It follows that if we wish to incorporate the harder enamels this is another reason for the choice of fine silver or 24-carat gold.

The dark green enamels, cobalt blues and deep purples will no doubt prove unsatisfactory to use, unless a fairly large opening or series of openings close together can be planned. Many applications of enamel will have to be made and subsequent layers and firings destroy the penetration of light in the darker colors. Additional applications of middle-value transparents give the approximate effect of the dark transparents. There are certain soft transparent enamels—yellows, pink and flux—on the market which react strangely to fine silver but not copper or gold. Such colors should be avoided for they will become cloudy or muddy even though they touch the silver only at the edges of the openings.

Assiduous grinding, washing and, in some cases,

thorough acidulation (washing the enamel in eight to ten drops of pure nitric acid to remove dust and metallic particles and to free certain alkalies) are of utmost importance. This preparation should occur immediately prior to application.

Plan your pattern or design carefully on paper and render it also in color. Remember that the motif or composition must consist of openings no more than $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch in diameter or width. However, an area may be longer than $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch if it is correspondingly narrower.

Create Webbed Structures

Proceed from the paper renditions to making an accurate tracing of the design on the metal. Then center punch each area to be sawed and drill the openings.

It is expected that the craftsman will have had experience in sawing metal and that the correct size blade will be used for the corresponding gauge of the metal. Perfect control of the sawing is paramount because the network of metal being created may be extremely delicate—connecting bands can be as narrow as $\frac{1}{32}$ -inch and still hold the piece intact.

The webbed structure achieved by sawing and a final filing of the edges is now ready for cleaning and enameling. At this point caution should be given about cleaning or brightening fine silver with steel wool because the holes are so numerous, and very often so pointed that fine bits of the wool have a tendency to get caught in the points. Be sure to check carefully and remove all traces of steel wool before applying the enamel.

Fill Openings with Enamel

Place the piece on a sheet of high-fire, amber-colored mica (it has a hard surface which will not chip or flake during firing and it is available from several companies). Add a few drops of concentrated gum tragacanth or agar solution to the carefully prepared enamel. Then push grains of the enamel well into the corners of each opening in the metal piece, filling all of them to the level of the metal. Leaving the piece on the mica, set the work on a flat-surfaced trivet or piece of asbestos board; and fire until the enamel becomes fused. *Never overfire.*

In high firing, the enamel tends to recede from the center of the openings and merely cling to the edges. After the first firing you will notice, on holding the piece to the light, that the smaller holes have become completely filled and larger holes only partially filled. Filling all the holes by adding enamel to the open spaces and refiring is apt to prove a rather long procedure—as many as twenty firings is not unusual. If in the process, the mica sticks to the underside of the enamel to any extent, stone it off between firings.

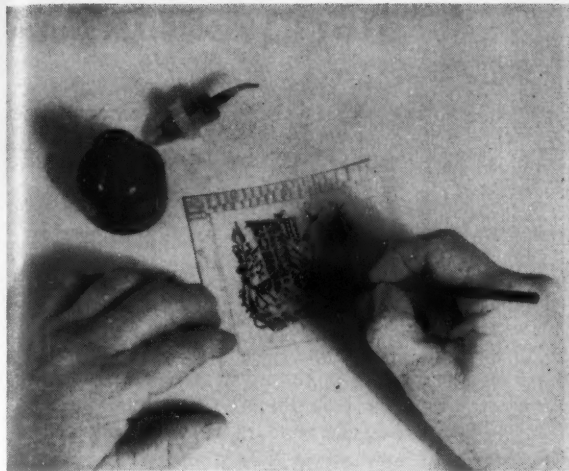
Stone with Caution

When all the holes are completely fused over, both the back and the front of the piece must be stoned. Set the fragile plique-a-jour firmly against a flat block of wood. Holding it under rapidly flowing water, and using a circular motion, cautiously grind the piece with fine-grade Carborundum.

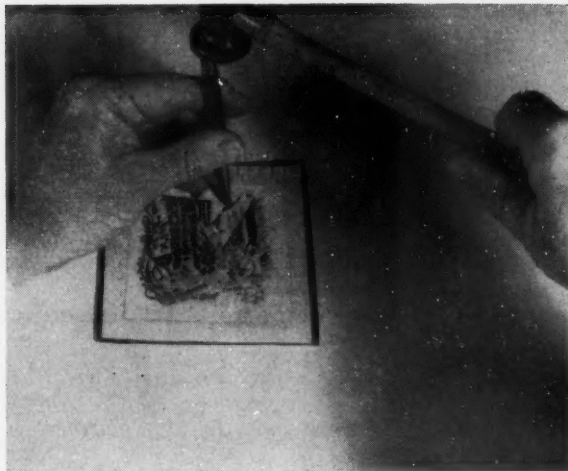
The last stoning is followed by a final firing with the piece set on a trivet so that it touches only at the edges thereby avoiding any further deposit of mica on the enamel. In this firing, great care must be taken to remove the enamel from the kiln at the exact moment of fusion. Otherwise, as the enamel becomes molten it will drip from the holes.

Finally, the piece may be polished in the usual manner. You will find that the delicate network of metal which supports the enamel "windows" is not strong enough to be buffed unless it is supported on a block of wood. Hold the plique-a-jour against the block firmly with both hands and apply the buffing wheel.

(Next month: Another plique-a-jour technique)



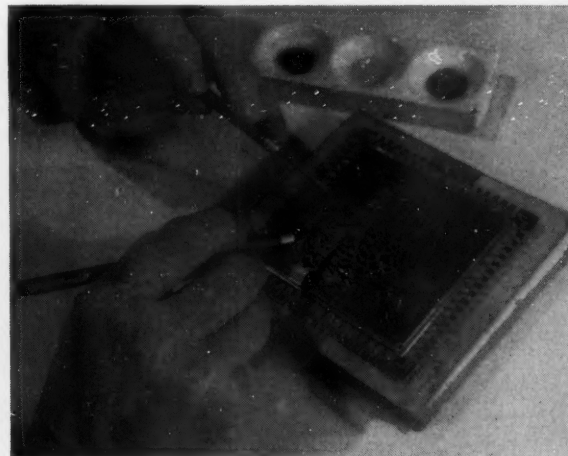
DEVELOP PATTERN on paper first. The design should be rendered in color, and the openings should not exceed $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch.



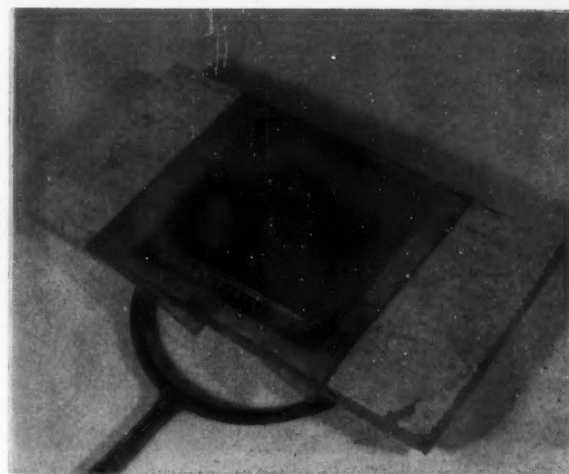
CENTER PUNCH each area to be sawed after the design has been traced on the metal. Then drill the openings.



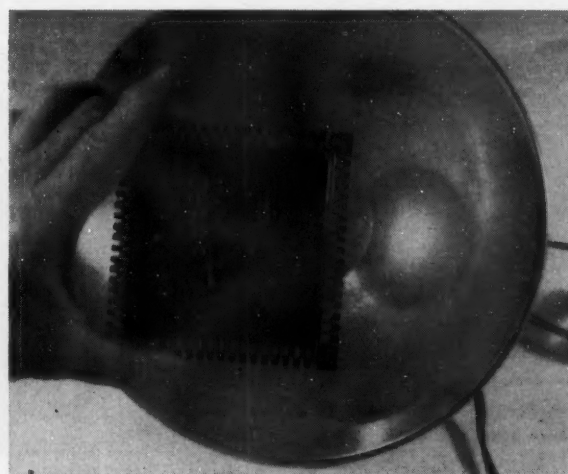
PERFECT CONTROL of the saw is paramount since connecting bands may be as narrow as $\frac{1}{32}$ -inch.



HOLES ARE FILLED with enamel, using spatula and spreader. Notice that sawed piece is placed on mica.



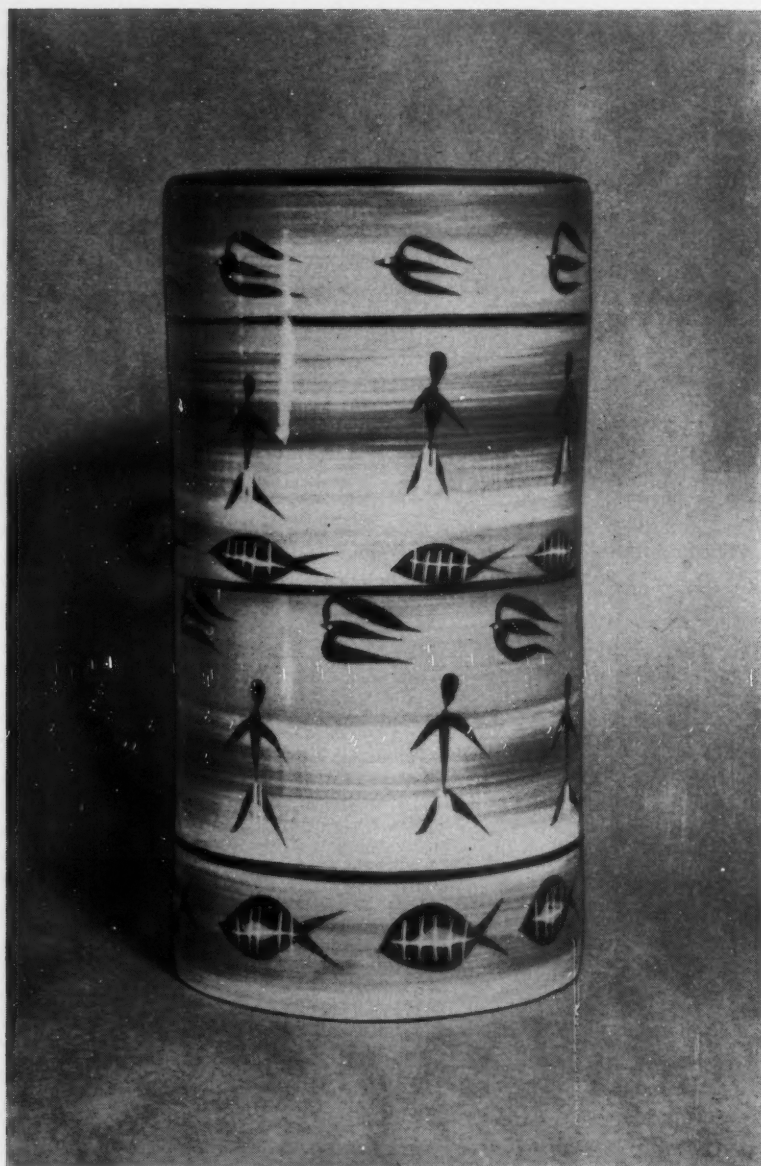
READY FOR FIRING, enamel first is placed on mica sheets and then on level-surface asbestos board.



DETECTING HOLES can be done by holding the fired piece before a strong light. Finished piece is on page 17.

The **CM** UNDERGLAZE Series

demonstrated
by MARC BELLAIRE



FINISHED AND GLAZED, the lamp base is ready for wiring. For details on assembling a lamp, see the article on page 28 of this issue.

In this series of articles, no specific brand of underglaze is either suggested or implied. The nationally advertised brands are highly competitive in quality and price. Mr. Bellaire's advice is to use those brands you feel give you the best results.



1. Dip a dampened sponge into light blue underglaze and, while revolving the banding wheel, apply the color.



5. The design elements, in black, go in next. A simple fish pattern is repeated in the aqua bands.

DECORATE with UNDERGLAZES

Design for TALL SHAPES

for the
HOBBY DECORATOR

EARTH, SEA and SKY, this month's motif, is particularly suitable for tall shapes such as lamp bases, decanters, vases and bottles. The aqua, light blue and brown background sets the mood. Light blue underglaze is used for the sky; brown for the earth; aqua for the sea. The design elements—men, fish and birds—further express the mood of the design. These figures, done in black with sgraffito details, are repeated in bands around the entire piece.

Before beginning to decorate, remember to take the necessary preliminary steps—cleaning and dampening the green ware—to insure a successful finished piece.

In this motif, a banding or decorating wheel is extremely useful for applying the bands of color. Be sure to center your piece carefully on the banding wheel be-

fore you begin to decorate. Turn the wheel with your left hand, maintaining a constant, fairly slow motion by twisting the stem. If you have trouble keeping your decorating hand steady, you may find a book or a jar a helpful prop for bracing. Carefully brace your hand on the prop, then gradually move it in toward the piece until the sponge touches the revolving green ware. The rest is easy since the piece practically decorates itself.

The sponge first is dampened before it is dipped into the underglaze color. It is touched lightly against the side of the container to remove the excess color. When applying the background, remember to hold the sponge stationary. Do not use a stroking action. With these pointers in mind, follow the step-by-step photo instructions on these pages. •



2. Sponge on two bands of brown underglaze next. A book or other prop is helpful for steadying your hand.



3. Sponge on aqua bands immediately below the brown, making alternating bands of blue, brown and aqua.



4. With a dampened sponge, gently ride up and down the bands, blending the colors along the edges.



6. Repeat designs of simple human and bird shapes are put in the brown and light blue bands respectively.



7. Sponge black underglaze on the top of the piece. Three narrow stripes also are brushed on with black.



8. Sgraffito is used for details—loincloths for human figures, bones of fish, and eyes of birds.

Strictly Stoneware

... stoneware clay bodies: part two

by F. CARLTON BALL



Mr. Ball continues by relating some of his own feelings and preferences regarding stoneware clay bodies, as well as suggested recipes.—Ed.

SOME OF MY own feelings about clay body material are as follows:

I feel that residual kaolins are not very plastic, but I would use them to raise the temperature of a body and to add whiteness. The plastic kaolins would add whiteness and raise the temperature and, because of their plastic nature, less ball clay, stoneware clay or surface clay would be necessary.

There are many ball clays available; some are more plastic than others. I would rather keep the ball clay content of a body to the minimum to cut down cracking and warping.

There are many plastic fire clays that, to me, are nearly the same as ball clays, so I would use a plastic fire clay in place of a ball clay. The plastic fire clays, ball clays and kaolin are quite fine and dense. A stoneware clay body can be quite pleasing if it isn't too dense and fine grained. To open the clay, to obtain a body that isn't too fine, slick or soapy, an addition of a flint fire clay is good. Flint fire clay acts something like grog, yet it is still clay. It seems to help the throwing qualities of a body even though it is not plastic.

There seem to be only a few companies from which flint fire clays may be obtained: Denver Fire Clay (Denver Fire Clay Co., Denver, Colo.), Missouri Flint Fire Clay (A.P. Green Co., Mexico, Mo.), North American Fire Clay (North American Refractories, Cleveland, Ohio). Each of these clays gives excellent color and texture to a throwing body.

Red surface clays or shales generally do not fire above cone 5. When a

red color is desired, it is best to use a natural red clay rather than add iron oxide. The red clay can be used in place of ball clay or plastic fire clay, but kaolin and flint must be added to raise the firing temperature of the red clay.

Red-firing residual kaolins are excellent for red-firing stoneware if you can locate a bed of this clay. It isn't mined generally, but your state geology department can help you locate some of this clay if it is available nearby.

If clays are mined by the potter, it probably would be a good idea to add from 1 to 5% barium carbonate to any clay body. This will not burst the clay and it will eliminate any sulphur that may be present.

As the potter learns about the natures of the clays he has available, and as he learns what he wants to make with his clays, he can adjust a clay body accordingly.

If a potter desires to do ceramic sculpture, slab-built pots or hand made tiles, then a fairly short body will do. A good quantity of flint fire clay, grog and flint can be used; and a very plastic, sticky, dense ball clay in a small quantity would suffice for the plastic quality of the body. It would be workable, but not good to throw. It would not shrink much or crack easily. The vitrification could be controlled by the amount of feldspar used, or by the temperature.

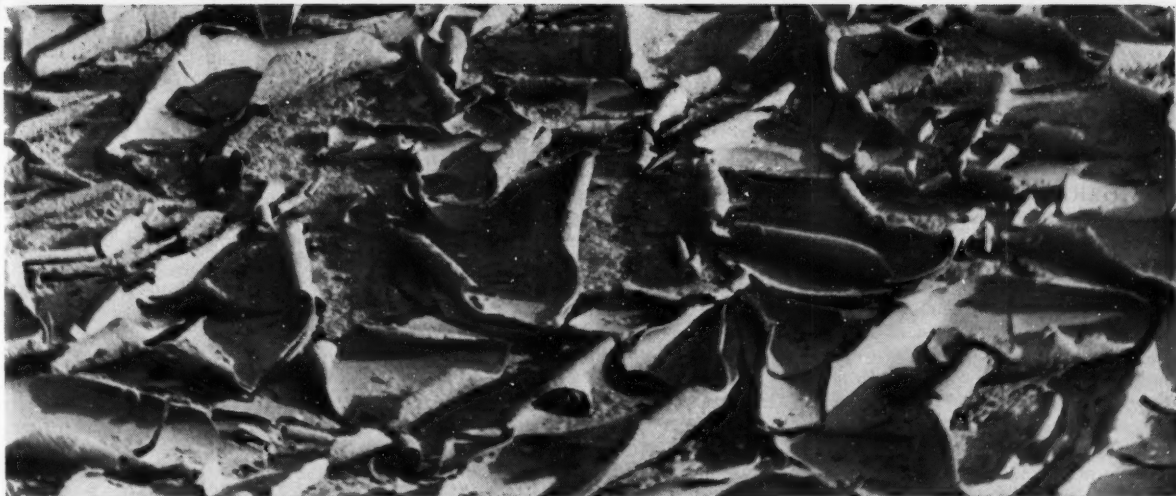
The recipes below are for clay bodies which are good for ceramic sculpture, tiles, slab and coil building or drape molding.

Next month Mr. Ball, in his discussion of stoneware clay bodies, will list some suggested recipes based upon the availability of materials in various sections of the United States. Sources of supply also will be mentioned in connection with the recipes.—Ed.

STONWARE CLAY BODIES

Recommended for sculpture, tiles, slab and coil building, drape molding

| Clay Body #1 | | Clay Body #5 | |
|----------------------------|----------|----------------------------|----------|
| | per cent | | per cent |
| Flint | 20 | Monmouth Clay | 15 |
| Grog | 15 | Flint | 15 |
| Randy Black Ball Clay | 10 | Grog | 15 |
| Cedar Heights Red Clay | 10 | Cedar Heights Red Clay | 10 |
| North American Fire Clay | 45 | A.P. Green Flint Fire Clay | 45 |
| Clay Body #2 | | Clay Body #6 | |
| | per cent | | per cent |
| Flint | 15 | Flint | 10 |
| Grog | 15 | Grog | 15 |
| Randy Black Ball Clay | 20 | Alberhill Red Clay | 10 |
| Cedar Heights Red Clay | 10 | Denver Fire Clay | 35 |
| North American Fire Clay | 40 | Lincoln Fire Clay | 30 |
| Clay Body #3 | | Clay Body #7 | |
| | per cent | | per cent |
| Monmouth Clay | 15 | Flint | 15 |
| Flint | 20 | Grog | 15 |
| Grog | 15 | Alberhill Red Clay | 10 |
| Dalton Red Clay | 5 | Denver Fire Clay | 40 |
| A.P. Green Flint Fire Clay | 45 | A.P. Green Fire Clay | 20 |
| Clay Body #4 | | Clay Body #8 | |
| | per cent | | per cent |
| Jordon Clay | 20 | Flint | 10 |
| Flint | 15 | Grog | 15 |
| Grog | 15 | Alberhill Red Clay | 5 |
| Dalton Red Clay | 10 | Denver Fire Clay | 40 |
| North American Fire Clay | 40 | Kentucky Ball Clay | 30 |



River Bottom Free Forms

After a severe rain the elements form these pieces from cracked earth; but it takes a ceramist to know what to do with them

by PEG TOWNSEND

HERE IN TUCSON, the old saw, "When it rains, it pours," really is true. Following one of these severe rains, the usually dry "river beds" overflow. Then, in a few days, the water disappears and the river banks are baked in the hot sun. What results is an odd sight. The cracked earth forms rolled-edge pieces of terra cotta which are spread about everywhere.

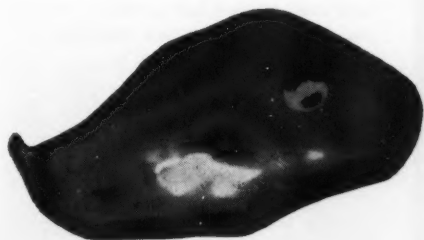
A friend of mine became interested in these free-form freaks of nature, and brought me a box of them from her "backyard," hinting that she was curious about how they would fire. A test firing was made and they came through splendidly.

The shapes were used just as they were picked up, with only a little sponging to smooth out the edges. The

pieces then were bisque fired to cone 06 to give them added strength so they could be handled for decorating without fear of breaking.

When decorating, it was interesting to let the imagination drift with the contours of each form to suggest a plan. The top of each piece was very smooth for decorating; and the underside, which had a rather rough sand-like texture, was left untouched.

Whether they are used for small ash trays or as bases for small dried flower arrangements, these pieces are sure to be a topic of conversation. When traveling, anyone may make a "find" like this. But only a ceramist would know what to do with them. ●



A FISH SHAPE like this seemed to invite the use of a gray satin glaze with touches of deep red.



SMALL SLIVERS of copper, cut from 36-gauge wire were dropped on top of a clear glaze, giving this interesting effect.



NATURAL CONTOURS of each piece determined its decoration, and imagination was given free rein.

HANDLES other than CLAY

by TOM SELLERS

THERE ARE TWO main types of handles usually made for thrown pottery. The most commonly seen type is the pulled handle which is welded to the pottery shape while plastic, and becomes a permanent part of the fired pot. Another frequently used type is the overhead handle.

This style handle is made from a material other than clay — usually cane, reed, bamboo, metal or wire. It is attached, after the pot is fired, to small clay loops or lugs which have been built up on the pot for that purpose.

Overhead handles may be purchased ready made, or they can be made by the craftsman. Metal or wire probably is the easiest to work with if you want to make your own handles. For added beauty, they can be wrapped with raffia.

Ready-made handles are so inexpensive (generally under 50c, some as low as 19c, depending on size) and so expertly made, that most

craftsmen prefer to purchase them. The only difficulty is locating a source of supply, since generally they are not carried by ceramic suppliers. Two concerns which carry ready-made handles are: *Katagiri & Co., Inc.*, 224 East 59th St., New York 22, N.Y. and *S.M. Iida Store*, P.O. Box 815, Honolulu, Hawaii. If you put your mind to it, you probably can track down others.

If you decide to purchase ready-made handles, check the sizes available *before* making the clay shape to insure a good fit and proper proportions for the total effect. Also check the handle to be sure it fits in with the *character* of your pot. Don't put a fragile-looking handle on a heavily-grogged pot; or a large, heavy handle on a small, delicate shape.

Although the overhead handle is used most often for teapots, it also can be used for covered jars or any other pot where a handle is necessary for function or desirable for decorative purposes. However, when

using the overhead handle on pots with lids, be sure the proportions of the handle allow the lid to be lifted on and off easily. And, of course, the over-all design must be one which insures good balance and easy handling of the ware.

The bamboo handle, such as the one used in the following demonstration, is pre-shaped, and has adjustable and flexible wire ends for attaching it to the pot. The ends are strong enough to support the weight for lifting, but flexible enough to be adjusted easily.

Should you desire to alter the shape of a bamboo handle to some degree, it can be done after soaking it overnight in water. Thus, it is possible to make the handle slightly longer or deeper or wider.

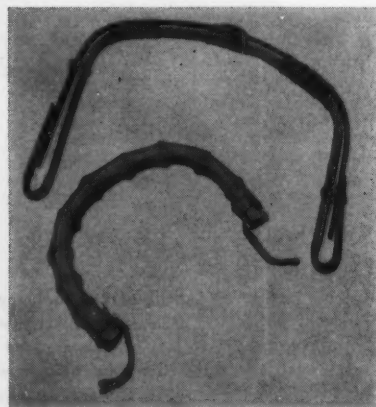
In the demonstration to follow, the pot already has been thrown and footed, the spout applied and the lid made. Now we begin working with the handle—in this case, a pre-shaped one:

Hold the handle in position on the pot, checking to make sure it fits the pottery shape in both character and size. Using a pencil, lightly mark the pot with a short horizontal line

(Continued on page 36)



FINISHED TEAPOT with bamboo handle attached. Though overhead handles are most frequently seen on teapots, they look good on a variety of shapes. In addition to bamboo, pre-shaped handles are made from cane, reed, metal and wire. Ready-made handles, like those shown below, are inexpensive but a source of supply may be difficult to locate.



Clay lugs on the pot hold this overhead handle in place. Made of cane, reed, bamboo, metal or wire, handles of this type are attached after the pot has been fired.



1 CHECK THE HANDLE with the pot, and indicate where the clay coils should be placed. When using a pre-shaped, ready-made handle, be sure to check the size before throwing the pot.



2 A PENCIL, lined up with the spout, is useful in determining the correct positions for the lugs. Mark the exact areas where the lugs will go, using a front-to-back position.



3 DAMPENED CLOTHS are put in place after the areas have been moistened. This softens the clay where the coils will be added, making for a better bond between the pot and lugs.



4 ROLL OUT a round, even coil, long enough to make two identical pieces for lugs. Keep in mind the character of the pot and the shape of the handle when rolling the coil. Cut the lugs.



5 SCORE the area where the lugs will be placed after removing the pieces of cloth from the pot. Apply slip before attaching the lugs, and hump them up—away from the body.



6 PRESS DOWN the ends of the lugs, attaching them to the slip-coated and scored areas. The end of a wooded modeling tool, or a pencil eraser, can be used to smooth out the joint.

ART ALONG



FIRST PRIZE in ceramic sculpture at the 1957 River Art Show was awarded to Martha Mood for her "Angel" made from St. Hedwig clay. The stoneware pot (right) by John Swiss Porter won the first prize in ceramics.

UNIQUE AND SUCCESSFUL installations for arts and crafts exhibits need not be elaborate or expensive. Every city has made-to-order settings—the lawn in front of City Hall, a municipal park, school or college grounds, the banks along a river—just waiting to be discovered by an alert sponsoring group.

Here's how the River Art Group of San Antonio, Texas, has utilized a natural setting within the city to produce successful shows for 13 years. Perhaps your organization can utilize some of these ideas when planning its next show.

The group holds its annual autumn exhibition of paintings, ceramics, weaving and other crafts on the banks of the picturesque San Antonio River—the stream which winds a green thread of tranquillity through the noise and clamor that is downtown San Antonio. A central location attracts hobbyists and the general public who usually shun exhibits in museums.

Artists and craftsmen are allotted space to display their work along the river's banks, and each artist tends his own exhibit. Paintings are hung on the ancient limestone walls of the old buildings along the river. Craftsmen exhibit their work in booths and displays they arrange themselves under the trees on the river's banks.

Also held in conjunction with the show is the Arneson Theater Competition, an open exhibit from which prize winners are selected by a jury of professional artists. Pieces entered in this competition are set up on the grassy rows of San Antonio's unique outdoor theater.

ARNESON THEATER competition includes paintings and crafts. The voice of the public is heard when it votes for the most popular piece.



RIVER

by PEGGY TOBIN

MARTHA MOOD of San Antonio poses with her display of ceramic sculpture which won first prize as the best display by an individual at the recent Texas show.

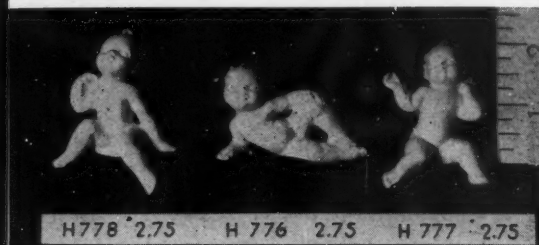


THE GENERAL PUBLIC, as contrasted to the usual "gallery-goers" turns out in a carnival mood to see the River Art Show. Some laugh, some gasp, and some buy paintings and crafts.

SERIOUS STUDENTS of the arts also attend the show, engaging in earnest discussion regarding the relative merits of the various exhibits.



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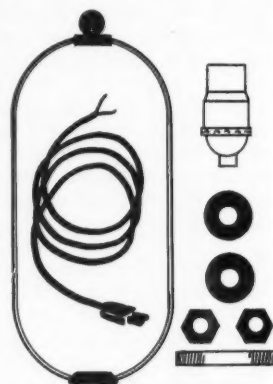
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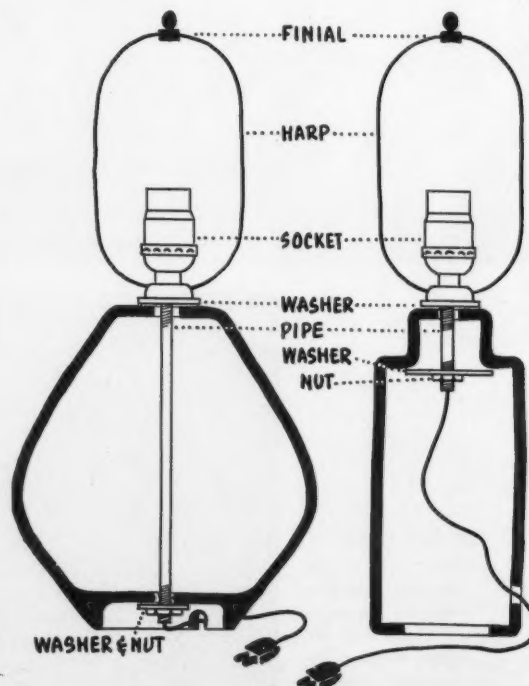
ASSEMBLE Your Own LAMPS

You don't have to be an electrician to assemble that lamp you made recently. That job is easy! The materials you need (shown at right) are inexpensive and can be obtained from your local hardware store. The cut-away sketch below shows you "what's inside" the lamp base, and illustrates the two basic methods of assembly. The method you use will depend upon the construction of the lamp base.

A shape with an open bottom requires the method shown below right. The apparatus is secured in the neck of the lamp base. The washer and nut are attached to a short length of threaded pipe. Using a string or wire, the unit is pulled into position through the bottom.



The second method is designed for lamp bases with only a small hole in the bottom. This method, illustrated at left, requires a recessed area in the bottom of the base to accommodate the bolt and washer. The socket and other outside parts are held in place by a long threaded pipe extending the length of the base, bolted to the bottom from the outside.



ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

(Continued from page 11)

use. There is a variance in the qualities and purposes of these products from different manufacturers. Some are good only for soft-bodied ware that does not require a high temperature for the china firing. Otherwise, all the colors are not durable. If you are decorating all kinds of china ware, including hard porcelain, make certain that you get a selection of dependable colors for all china temperature ranges. Hard china (imported ware) requires a cone 013 temperature for full development of glossiness in the colors. Soft "art" body ware should not be fired over cone 019.—ZENA HOLST

Q Thrown side handles are most attractive, and I like them. However, I encountered a difficulty in drying. Even though the handles on each side of a casserole were supported because of their additional weight, the casserole split while drying. Why?

The heavier handles tend to dry more slowly than the thinner walls of the piece itself; and this different rate of drying can set up a strain and perhaps induce cracking. Since thrown handles usually are heavier at the base, where they have been cut from the wheel, this drying strain can be lessened by thinning out the base of the handles with a fettling knife. However, even after this precaution has been taken, extremely slow drying is essential.—TOM SELLERS

Q I have a very old hand decorated dinner set that has much of the gold banding worn off. I tried to match it with Roman gold but that is too yellow. The old gold is more red in color. Is it possible to mix a liquid or some other form of metal with the Roman to get the old color?

The old gold probably is red gold, which formerly was used a great deal. It now is available in the paste form as well as green gold and white gold. All of the paste metals are intermixable.—ZENA HOLST

Q I am confused by the terms "viscous" and "non-viscous" glazes. I have seen very thin, runny glazes referred to as viscous and very thick glazes—almost too thick to stick a brush into—called non-viscous?

These terms refer to the fluidity of the glaze while it is in the kiln at its melting temperature. A viscous glaze is one that is thick and will not run while at its melting temperature in the kiln. Conversely, a non-viscous glaze is quite thin at its maturing temperature in the kiln and will tend to run or drip.—KEN SMITH

Q Is it risky to stilt greenware when firing to cone 06?

I assume you mean tilting the glazed piece of greenware for single firing. There is no reason why you should not stilt such a piece. The ware should not slump or warp at its maturing temperature of cone 06. The size and shape of the ware will dictate how to set it on a stilt. If the ware has a foot, it is best to set the stilt under the foot for extra strength.—KEN SMITH

All subscriber inquiries are given individual attention at CM; and, out of the many received, those of general interest are selected for answer in this column. Direct your inquiries to the Questions Editor; please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope.

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THE OVERGLAZE PAGE

How to Use LUSTRES part 3

by ZENA HOLST

Mrs. Holst continues her discussion of lustres, picking up where she left off last month. This series began in the November 1957 issue. —Ed.

Brushes for Lustres

Camel hair brushes are best for lustre painting. I prefer the kind that are set in quills. Those set in other ferrules seem more difficult to clean; and lustres are difficult enough to clean from any brush. Sometimes it takes several washings and changes of the cleansing agent. They should dry soft and fluffy. Separate brushes should be used for each color if possible. If care is taken that the brush is thoroughly cleaned after each use, the same brush may be used for opal, mother of pearl and for some of the very light colors. The same brush also may be used for two closely related colors such as yellows, or blues, or greens—*providing* none of these are dark shades. Each dark color must have its own brush for application. Contamination from a brush can ruin a painting. Under no circumstances should a brush be used that has been used for gold or any of the other overglaze pigments. Designate the name of the color on the handle of each brush.

The size of the brush to be used should be in proportion to the space to be covered. Use the largest brush possible at all times. A short haired, fat and pointed brush is best for stippling applications. A long square shader brush is best for smoother painting when covering wide areas with colors that need to be patted. Small pointed liners are necessary for detail work and for the execution of tiny designs. Small and medium-sized square or slanting brushes are used for banding.

Preparation for Painting

Cleanliness and neatness are imperative. Lustres have an affinity for lint, dust, moisture and grease. Any one of these which is picked up in the application or afterwards will cause unsightly blemishes in the finished piece. A hobby room where there is wet clay and dust from green ware is no place for working with lustres.

Drying green ware produces humidity in the air; and lustres are sensitive to atmospheric conditions. Neither is a cold room good. The room where the decorating is to be done should be an average room temperature, about 70°F. Both the lustres and the ware to be decorated also should be at room temperature. Lustres cannot be applied nicely to a cold dish. Work on a clean table covered with plastic or some other non-absorbant material, in an area which is free from linty rags.

Manufacturers suggest various cleansing agents; such as Benzol, lacquer thinner and alcohol, for use with lustres. I prefer pure denatured alcohol for all cleansing purposes, including the brushes. *Never* use turpentine. It is not compatible with lustres and tends to turn colors bluish. Clean the object that is to be decorated with alcohol and tissue paper (not a rag). Use another piece of tissue paper for the final drying.

Always handle the piece with tissue paper or a soft piece of silk to avoid getting finger marks on the piece where lustre is to be applied. Oil from the fingers forms a mask and the lustre will not adhere. Cleanup work, made necessary from a messy application, is done with alcohol. The easiest way to handle the object while you are painting it is to place it on a decorating or banding wheel. If the entire surface is to be covered with lustres, place an asbestos board under the object for easy removal to the drying place (oven or kiln).

Methods of Application

You may dip directly into the bottle of lustre, but be careful not to overload the brush. It is difficult to see how far to dip into a bottle. Set the bottle inside something to make it stationary so that you don't tip it at a crucial moment. It is better to pour some of the lustre into a small flat container so you can dip the brush in the edge of the lustre. You also can work faster from an open receptacle. Keep the bottle closed and do not switch caps or corks since you may contaminate the color.

Hard to get at places, like the in-
(Continued on page 34)

SUGGESTIONS

(Continued from page 10)

over the sharp edge of a table. A full sheet is awkward to handle, so it may be better in some cases to purchase smaller sections.

I place a convenient size piece of asbestos under each piece to be glaze fired and use no stilts. If, on occasion, a piece sticks, it can be separated by a slight prod and ground off.

Although the material becomes very brittle after firing and breaks easily, I keep even the small pieces until they finally crumble. (I always test a sample of a new glaze on a small piece of asbestos.)

I was especially happy to find that tiles could be fired without scraping the bottoms, and they come out flat. I have fired to cone 5 without ill effect. In a full year I have used only half a sheet of asbestos board, so I highly recommend it as a good substitute for stilts.

— D. H. Harris, Canisteo, N.Y.

Reinforced Plaster Bats

In working with plaster bats, I have found that they are easily broken. The bats can be made stronger if, when



you are casting them, you put a wire coat hanger between two layers of plaster.

— Nat Schlamkowitz, Bronx, N.Y.

Sandpaper for Level Bottoms

In a previous column [Aug. 1957], it was suggested that carbon paper be used as an aid for leveling the bottoms of handcrafted pots. I find that rubbing the piece over a medium to medium-coarse grade of sandpaper is faster for leveling the bottom and rim of a pot, whether handcrafted or poured. Often, in molded pieces, the waste is indicated by an indentation. Once this waste is cut off, I turn the piece upside down and gently rub it over the sandpaper. In a few minutes, I have an even edge which then can be "steel-wooled" to remove the sharp edges.

— Lea M. Somers, Baltimore, Md.

For Flat Tiles

To dry tiles successfully, whether regular or irregular in shape, roll and cut them on a marble slab covered with oilcloth, wrong side up. For drying, transfer the tiles to another marble slab covered like the first. Cover the tiles completely with blocks of wood about two inches thick. Check the tiles regularly, turning them over each day. Drying is slowed considerably, but tiles dry flat.

Tiles also are weighted in the bisque firing. Stack them flat in the kiln, one on top of the other in two or three layers. Place on top of each stack a piece of green ware large enough to cover the tiles, but not too heavy. An ash tray makes an excellent weight for this purpose.

— Beth Tracy Mullins, Saratoga, Calif.

Dollars for your Thoughts

CM pays \$1 to \$5 for each item used in this column. Send your bright ideas to Ceramics Monthly, 4175 N. High St., Columbus 14, Ohio. Sorry, but we can't acknowledge or return unused items.

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DESIGNING AND THE ENAMELER

There is such tremendous interest in enameling. So many people want to do it—oh, so young (well, not that young but young at heart) and both male and female. Craftsmen or persons coming from completely unrelated fields, they are hungry to learn more and more about it. I know that you know this because I am asked many, many questions about enameling; and I am always glad to tell everything I know about the technique. Technique certainly is very important and there is no end to it. Hardly a working day goes by that I do not hit on something I have not done before which seems to be new in this ancient art of enameling. Much technical help is asked, but there is something else—the outcries I hear ever so often: "How do I tackle a design?" and "I cannot design!" and "I can't draw a straight line!"

My answer to the first usually is: "Oh, yes you can;" and to the second: "You don't have to." Designing ability is not evenly distributed among God's children. We all know that. There is no doubt about it. With some people, it just comes naturally and others have to fuss and think a great deal about a design. And some get quite discouraged. Please don't. Designing ability can be developed. Let's make a beginning.

The enameLER, most of the time, is busy making objects for utility purposes. Some go in more for fine arts—plaques and sculptures—but most of these adventurous people have a lot of training behind them and do not need my advice anyhow. So, let's worry first about the utility pieces and how to design them so you won't be disappointed with the results.

What do we expect from a well-designed enamel object? It has to be functional. It has to look handsome, and it has to show the technique of perfection. How can that be achieved? (It ain't easy, but it's worth a good try.)

FUNCTION DEFINED

What is a functional piece? It must serve the purpose for which it was

designed. If it is an ash tray, it must hold ashes and cannot be too flat. It has to stand securely, it cannot be too deep and it needs a devise to hold a cigarette. It must be easy to clean. If your piece is to hold fruit, it must hold it, and must not "for design's sake" have a shape that doesn't. If it is to hold a liquid, the container must be well balanced and should not spill or drip.

In a sentence, the first decision one must make is on the shape. *The shape must suit its purpose best and in the simplest manner.* If you stay simple, you cannot go wrong you know.

A basic geometrical shape always is the best bet. Geometrical forms have been popular through the ages and will never "fade away." Free-form kidney shapes will, but if you must do them, try to give the curves real line and grace. Don't draw them in with short, fuzzy, cautious lines. Instead, rest your arm on the table and lead your pencil or brush by swinging your hand from the wrist in swift movements.

HINTS ON DECORATING

In decorating the piece, you first have to decide on a technique you want to use. Then make a design for that technique. Often it is done the other way around, and that is where the difficulties come in. You never should force a technique into something it is not suited for—very long lines in cloisonne wire, for example. Long wires constantly will dislodge from the enamel and you will be in great trouble, just because you did not think the design through before you started. So think what kind of design is best for the technique.

Secondly, consider what sort of pattern to use. From what direction will the piece be viewed most of the time. This is important. Assuming it is a round tray which will sit on a table, a pattern which is pleasing from every direction, no matter which way it is looked at, is ideal.

My advice for people who have difficulty on a design, is to draw the outline of the piece to be decorated on paper in the original size. Cut

(Continued on page 36)

Ceram Activities

people, places & things

AMONG OUR AUTHORS:

■ Since graduating from the State University College for Teachers at Buffalo, N.Y., in 1949, Robert J. Schaefer has been teaching industrial arts. In addition to teaching ceramics at Williamsville (N.Y.) Central High School, he also teaches metalworking, graphic arts, mechanical drawing, electricity and woodworking.



Secrist of Canandaigua, N. Y., received the first prize in ceramics for his platter. Second prize was awarded to Robert Turner, Alfred Station, N.Y., for a small blue vase. A carved jar with lid by Adele Cowen Greenburg of Rochester, N.Y., received honorable mention.

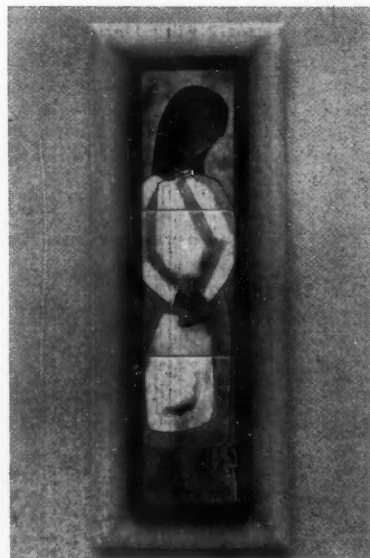
A plaque, entitled "Young Girl," by Arlene Murdoch of Rochester, N.Y., received top enameling honors. Awards in the decorative arts section were given to Karl Giehl, also of Rochester, for an enamel on silver medal; and

(Continued on page 34)

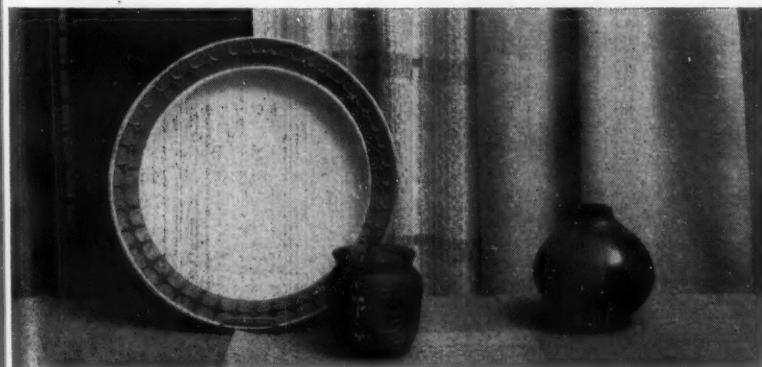
In addition to the two-week summer day camp for children, Williamsville also has a ceramics program for adults. In commenting on this program, Mr. Schaefer says, "We here at Williamsville also have an extensive adult education program in ceramics with about 40 adults enrolled each year. In this course, we include the usual forming techniques of the potter's wheel, slabs, coils, tiles, slip casting, etc. Some of the work turned out in these classes has won prizes in various exhibitions in this area."

ROCHESTER-FINGER LAKES EXHIBITION: Representing the work of artists and craftsmen in the Rochester-Finger Lakes (N.Y.) area, this show consisted of 415 pieces. The recent exhibit included ceramics, enamels, weaving, jewelry, metalwork and furniture.

Stoneware, with an emphasis on incised and applied decoration, dominated the ceramics category. James D.



"YOUNG GIRL," an enameled plaque by Arlene Murdoch, received the top award in the enameling division.



PRIZEWINNERS in the ceramics division of the Rochester-Finger Lakes Exhibition were James Secrist for a platter, Robert Turner for a small vase, and an honorable mention for Adele Cowen Greenburg for a covered jar.

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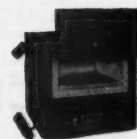
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Overglaze Page

(Continued from page 30)

side of a cup, can be covered most easily by patting on with the forefinger. In fact, I have seen a large piece done in this manner, both inside and out. Start a large object, like a vase or bowl, from the middle front. By working alternately on each side and around to the back, the joining can be made without finishing against a dry line which would be unsightly. A bowl or a flat plate, when lustered inside, should be started from the center and painted around in circles up to the edge.

(To be continued)

Ceram-Activities

(Continued from page 33)

Kurt Feuerherm, of Marion, N.Y., for "Gothic," an enameled plaque.

Judges for the exhibition were Raymond Dowden, painter and professor of design, Cooper Union Art School, New York City; Thomas S. Tibbs, director of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York City; Mahonri Sharp Young, director of The Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, Columbus, Ohio; and Vaclav Vytlačil, painter and instructor at The Art Students League, New York City. More than 1,400 objects were submitted to the judges by 371 artists and craftsmen from 54 New York communities.

NORTHWEST CRAFTSMEN: Entry blanks now are available for the Sixth Annual Northwest Craftsmen's Exhibition to be held March 9-April 9 at the Henry Gallery, University of Washington, in Seattle. Craftsmen of Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, British Columbia and Alaska are eligible to enter the juried show.

Prizes will be awarded in four classes, including ceramics, ceramic sculpture, enamels and mosaics. Further information and entry blanks are available from the Henry Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle 5, Wash.

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THIS HOLLOW CERAMIC vessel with a tail spout shows a caoti eating an ear of corn. About nine inches tall, it goes back to 900 A.D.

PRE-COLUMBIAN ANIMAL SCULPTURE: The two most extensive categories included in the current exhibition, "Animal Sculpture in Pre-Columbian Art," are ceramic sculpture of Colima, Mexico, and from the Mochica civilization of Peru.

The exhibit will be shown in the Gallery of Primitive Arts, at the Art Institute of Chicago, Michigan Avenue at Adams Street; until February 2.

The Mexican culture conceived an infinite variety of realistic, terra-cotta, hollow vessels of figures and animals with a spout opening—either from the back, top or side. The most frequently depicted animal is the "techichi," a fleshy, hairless dog used for food. Sculptured effigies of this small obese animal were buried with the dead, probably to serve as guides and companions.

The Mochica animal sculpture from Peru is symbolic of a diety or patron's clan, and rank. These are distinctly different from the Mexican image. Mochican pottery was conceived in simplified forms with selected detail, simple color schemes, and most frequently composed with a hollow tubed "stirrup spout" as part of the design.

Perfect preservation of these superb art objects of the ancient Indian civilization was possible, since ceremonial custom for centuries decreed that the objects be buried in tombs of warriors, priests, and governing classes.

This unique exhibition consists of 150 sculptures of approximately 60 different animals from ancient Peru and Mexico; and covers a period of more than 1500 years.

ASSISTANTSHIP AVAILABLE: Applications are being accepted by the Department of Art at the University of Hawaii for a graduate assistantship in the History of Far Eastern Art, including ceramics. The assistantship will provide a stipend of nearly \$1,800 and exemption from tuition and fees, and will be available in September. Deadline for application is March 15, 1958.

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Handles

(Continued from page 24)

to indicate how far down on the pot
the lugs will be placed. (1).

Positioning from front to back,
mark the exact areas where the lugs
will go, using a pencil to help line
up the spacing with reference to the
spout (2).

When you have carefully marked
these positions, moisten the areas with
water and cover with damp pieces of
cloth (3). This will soften the clay
where the coils will be added, making
for a better bond.

Roll out a round, even coil, being
careful to relate its thickness to the
character of the shape and the
handle; and make it long enough to
provide two identical pieces to serve
as lugs. Cut the pieces the same
length (4).

After removing the pieces of cloth
from the pot, score the area where
the coils will go (5), and apply slip
before attaching them.

Carefully observing the positioning
marks, attach the coils. The center of
the lug is humped up, away from
the body, to provide a space for the
ends of the handle to pass through.
Then secure the ends of the coils
by pressing them down, attaching
them to the slip-coated and scored
areas. Smooth out the joint (6).

Once you have made a teapot with
an overhead handle, you probably
will want to try this type of handle
on other kinds of pots as well. Cookie
jars, ice buckets and containers for
flowers are just a few pot types which
can be enhanced with overhead
handles. ●

Enameler's Column

(Continued from page 32)

assorted shapes from paper and dis-
tribute them in different layouts with-
in the outline prepared. This is a
great aid in preparing a design easily.
Also think of cutting the shapes not
all the same size—some large, some
small, and some medium size.

Next, you have to decide on your
palette. Color, for an enamel, is of
utmost importance. Think—is the
piece to be cheerful and bright? Use
transparents and opaques on white.
If it is to be deep and subtle, use them
both over a transparent basic coat.
If the piece is to be in cool colors,
distribute a little of a warm color
here and there over the piece. If
the piece is to be in warm colors, use
a little cool color in the same way.

With all these wise rules, you have
to produce good designs now. ●

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